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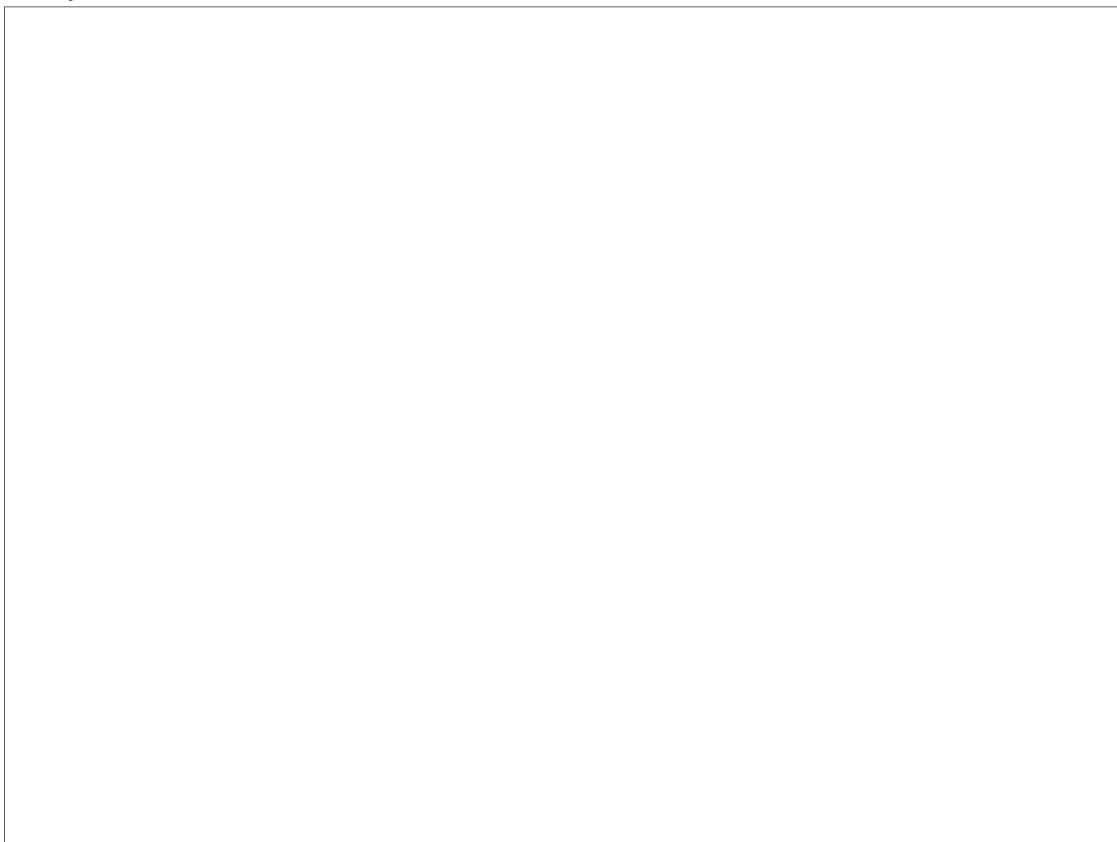
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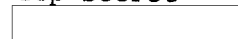


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EGYPT: Response to US Peace Initiative

Egypt's formal reply to President Reagan's proposal describes it as a "positive step" while emphasizing Egyptian concerns regarding West Bank autonomy, Israeli settlements, territorial adjustments, and East Jerusalem. [redacted] 25X1

In a letter delivered to Ambassador Atherton yesterday, Foreign Minister Ali requested several "clarifications" while his government continues to study the proposal. Ali contended that the initiative overemphasizes Israeli security and the concept of defensible borders and fails to go "all the way" to satisfy the Palestinian right of self-determination. He stated, however, that the Egyptian Government does not see the initiative as foreclosing the exercise of this right. [redacted] 25X1

1/2 Ali applauded US support for the concept of full autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza. He reiterated the Egyptian view, however, that this requires the establishment of a self-governing authority with full legislative powers. [redacted] 25X1

The Foreign Minister noted with satisfaction that the issues of the settlements and Jerusalem are back on the negotiating table and requested assurances that a freeze on settlements would halt any "thickening" of existing settlements. In remarks to the Ambassador, he stressed that East Jerusalem should be an integral part of the West Bank. [redacted] 25X1

Comment: Ali's letter is consistent with Egypt's publicly stated positions. Although Cairo sees shortcomings in the US proposal, the tone of the reply indicates Egypt's support for the initiative as a basis for negotiations. Egyptian leaders are optimistic that the plan can be further developed to overcome their reservations. [redacted] 25X1

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PANAMA-CUBA: Increasing Tensions

Havana is concerned over the more conservative policies of President de la Espriella's government in Panama and the hardline approach to relations adopted by National Guard commander Paredes.

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A high-level Panamanian delegation recently returned from Havana, where it attempted to relieve growing tensions with the Castro regime over regional policies. The trip followed a visit last month by a similar Cuban delegation to Panama.

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